

Quarterly News Letter

Vol. xxxix

Winter 1973

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IN TYPOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

by Thomas Wolf

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BOOK GIFTS

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Hours: Monday 11-7, Tuesday through Friday 2-5.

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN TYPOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

*by Thomas Wolf **

IT was three years ago that I first decided to make a cautious foray into typographic research. It was spring semester at Harvard and I had at my disposal some spare time, the magnificent collection of books and manuscripts at the Houghton Library, and a sympathetic mentor—Houghton's curator, Professor William H. Bond. I was a complete novice and in retrospect it was a fairly presumptuous undertaking. As a student in psychology, the only justification I could offer for invading the quiet halls of Houghton and making demands on its staff was my love of beautiful books.

Though I knew almost nothing about typography, I was not altogether unfamiliar with books. I had looked at a great many in fact as a modest collector of private press volumes. Like many collectors, my association with books had been personalistic and idiosyncratic. I liked what I liked and, more often than not, what I liked was what I owned. My familiarity with secondary sources was

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scant. In the field of typography I knew only one book, D. B. Updike's *Printing Types*, a second edition of which I owned but had never read.

Armed with enthusiasm and a smattering of information gleaned from a few weeks in Professor Bond's seminar in bibliography, I attempted what seemed a fairly simple research problem. Using techniques and methods that I had been taught in the social scientific wing of the university, I attempted to analyze minutely the characteristics which contribute to a "successful" font of type.

For my "successful" type font, I chose the 15th-century roman letter of Nicholas Jenson. There were a number of compelling factors which made this the logical choice. I had read enough of *Printing Types* in preparation for the project to know that Jenson was a typographic god, a name to be reckoned with—if longevity was any measure of typographic success, a type which had been copied for five centuries was a likely candidate. I had also learned that Houghton had several handsome examples of the Italian Humanist hand on which Jenson modeled his type—it might be useful to be familiar enough with the precursor of the type, to know precisely what Jenson had taken and what he had ignored in the calligraphic version of the letters. Finally, I knew that Morris' "Golden" type and the Walker-Cobden-Sanderson collaboration on the "Doves" font were both based in part on Jenson—what better way to understand the secrets of a successful type than to study the characteristics of its descendants?

While I was primarily interested in the enduring qualities of the Jenson letters, I was certain that the study of the other alphabets would prove helpful. By comparing and contrasting versions of the same letter, I could locate distinctive features which might aid in cracking the secret of a successful type. At the same time I could also answer other questions: how much were letter-forms modified in their translation from calligraphy to type? or, how much and how significant were the alterations in the fonts of the revivalist printers?

As outlined, the project seemed simple enough. I would photograph the letters from the various alphabets, blow them up to a two-inch x-height, superimpose a grid, and compare them letter by letter. Perhaps it was here that my inexperience was most fatal. The project was neither simple nor straight-forward. Had it not been for a marvelous photographer at the Fogg Museum and a sympathetic friend who had the patience to spend many hours in a dark room working on the enlargements, the project would have been scrapped in mid-stream.

In the end, my excursion into typographic research turned out to be not only expensive and time-consuming, but something of an intellectual *cul-de-sac* as well. Once I had my enlargements, I was really not very much closer either to the secrets of Jenson or the relative merits of his followers. A story which my violinist-grandmother had told me several years before came to mind—an old violin maker was approached excitedly by a group of scientists who told him that the chemical composition of Stradivarius' varnish had finally been isolated. "Really?" questioned the old man. "And I suppose they have also found what chemicals make the beautiful sound."

Aside from the basic issue of whether the paper succeeded in discovering the secrets of a beautiful type face, there were other, smaller, problems as well. It occurred to me midway through the project that what might look significant in an enlarged photograph of a letter could turn out to be inconsequential or invisible to the naked eye in the original size. Subsequent psychological research into the reading process pointed to another difficulty—it showed that skilled readers rarely look at individual letters at all. In normal reading, the eye fixates at three or four locations in a line of type. Each fixation takes in a whole word or group of words. Much of the line is not perceived at all. There is not time and it is hardly necessary since the reader can "implete" (fill in) from past experience. What difference, then, would the slightly excessive bulge of a particular serif make to a skilled reader?

My first instincts about the project were confirmed the following summer. My wife and I had arranged to learn something of the art of handpress printing. Harry Duncan had taken us on as compositors and press-men at his Cummington Press which was at that time still in West Branch, Iowa. I decided to send a copy of my paper ahead to get Harry's reaction. Soon after our arrival, I regretted it. After a particularly dismal morning which included my knocking over ("pieing") a galley of set type, Harry broke his usual rule of silence in the press-room. "You know," he said, "there is really no room for 'scientists' in the field of typography."

Despite the short-comings of the final version of the paper, the project turned out to have great value for me, changing my casual interest in typography to something much more serious. I did not discover the secret of Jenson's type; but I made other observations fundamental to my understanding of typography.

First, I learned that the classical literature of typography was oriented toward historical questions. As a social scientist, coming into the field through the back door, I was afforded a perspective on this state of affairs which typographic scholars no longer had. I could see that the great figures of the typographic movement (men like Updike, Morison, Haebler, and A. F. Johnson) were, at least in their writings, essentially historians. No matter how much they knew about type, they had elected to use typography to further bibliography than to study it for its own sake.

By contrast, the small literature by men interested in type for its own sake was uneven and generally not very helpful. The writings of printers like Morris, Cobden-Sanderson, and, more recently, Victor Hammer, certainly bucked the trend of an historical approach. But this literature, interesting as it was, did not serve the scholar. Much of it was polemical and all of it treated questions which did not lend themselves easily to substantive answers. It is all very well to argue what makes a type appropriate or "beautiful" in a certain context, but since the issue is essentially aesthetic, it cannot be

settled by a scientist. Furthermore, some of this literature was actually misleading. I was fully convinced, after reading Sparling's biography of William Morris, that the printer had some solid evidence for the fact that the eye travelled along the upper half of the x-height of letters. Later, I discovered that this theory had been lifted from the work of Emile Javal, who, on this point at least, had been proven wrong by more up-to-date research.

Thus, the only solid secondary sources on which I could rely were historically oriented. The second discovery I made was that even this literature was outdated and probably obsolete. The important typographic scholars of the 20th century (again one could mention Updike, Morison, Haebler and Johnson) were dead. The newer books on type, more often than not, tended to adopt the views of these men (particularly those of Updike) almost without question or modification. My distinct impression of the typographic literature was that it represented a pretty stale field of inquiry if Updike's book, published in the early twenties, was still the source most often quoted.

Subsequently, I read Harry Carter's book on early types (published in 1969) and realized that I was not alone in expressing concern about the apparent barrenness of the field. I found his call for a revitalization of typographic study most encouraging: "As compared with bibliography of the modern analytical kind the study of type historically considered has been amateurish. People have written about post-incunabular types because they liked them and thought them beautiful. . . . We must try, without taking delight out of the subject, to modernize it." (Carter, p. 1.)

Carter, like the other scholars, was still representing the historian's view-point. I could not agree with his principal goal for a new science of typography—"being able to distinguish typefaces and label them"—but I could appreciate his advocacy of a research program with clear-cut goals which employed sound methods and techniques for achieving them.

Finally, since I took the view that historical questions did not have to be the only important ones in typography, I began to mull over precisely what typographic study had been in the past in order to determine for myself what the goals of a new approach might be. I recalled that the best analyses of type had concerned themselves with all aspects of the typographic problem—type size and shape, spacing between words, leading between lines, composition and arrangement of pages, use of color and ornament. I was willing to grant that this *total* view of the printed page was the right one. Regardless of the usual predilection of social scientists to narrow the field of inquiry, I was convinced that the printed page was an essentially indivisible unit.

At the same time I marvelled at the phenomenal complexity of approach reflected in the thorough, analytical research techniques of Konrad Haebler, perhaps the greatest typographic scholar of all time. While there was no reason to be perverse, revelling in detail for its own sake, I felt that Haebler's methodology had set a high standard which any new science in the field of typography should seek to emulate.

With these as my givens, I thought about how the perspective of a social scientist might be useful in posing relevant questions. Research *method* was not enough. A research *program* was called for. What would the goals of my new science of typography be? I pondered this question as I worked on the Jenson paper and continued to think about it during the following year. Eventually I became re-immersed in psychological investigation and left the issue unresolved.

But then something unexpected happened which brought the question sharply into focus again. I had been haphazardly digging about for new insights into the reading process, learning what various perceptual and cognitive psychologists had written about the acquisition and mastery of the reading skill. Suddenly my efforts revealed buried treasure—I happened on some studies which were

concerned with letter-forms and page composition. There it was, my new science of typography. Of course I had not met the young doyens of this new movement a year before in the Houghton Library because all along they had been much closer to home. They were right in my back yard. They were, in fact, psychologists.

Analytical Typography

Thus, I came to realize that the revitalization of typographic research was coming from outside the conventional bibliographic and typographic community. New life was being injected in the field as psychologists brought their analytical research methods to bear on new kinds of problems. No more was typography to be relegated to the position of hand-maiden to bibliography; no longer would it be oriented exclusively toward historical interests. Researchers were now regarding the printed page as a critical variable in their attempts to understand such things as human information processing, pattern recognition, symbol de-coding, and the organization of thought processes in reading.

I like to call this new movement "analytical typography," borrowing the name (with apologies for removing it from context) from Harry Carter. The term "analytical" is helpful, for it conveniently separates the newer line of research from earlier approaches, both historical and aesthetic. The range and variation of studies in analytical typography is immense and it is difficult to generate a simple summary of the work done. Consider, for example, how much ground is covered by the following topics, all of which are currently under investigation:

Measuring the relative legibility of type faces.

Determining precisely which characteristics of letter shape are "critical" to a child's acquisition of the reading skill.

Evaluating the impact of different compositional approaches on the organization of thought units in reading.

Drawing implications for future type designing from current research in the areas of perception and cognition.

This great diversity in subject matter is off-set by the methods and goals which all these research programs share. All proceed according to the well-established rules of social-scientific analysis. A group of subjects is gathered and run through a well-defined task, data is collected and statistically evaluated; conclusions are generally conservative—often studies do no more than suggest newer, more refined tests.

However, method is not the only common element which unifies the field of analytical typography. All of these studies have as a chief aim a fuller understanding of the *relationship* between the reader-perceiver and the printed page. The page is conceived less as a static and self-contained object and considered more as the dynamic stimulus in a human activity. Thus, analytical typography is oriented toward an understanding of *process*. It is a field of investigation in which the printed page takes on a new character, becoming partner to the very act of thinking itself.

It is this aspect of the new science of typography which I find most exciting. Gone are the days in which a 15th-century leaf can be talked about without ever being examined. Indeed, if incunables ever become a serious object of study for psychologists—and there are already some indications that they might—we may witness a new and strange occurrence: rare books leaving library vaults to be returned, for a moment at least, to the very function for which they were originally intended—to be read! For studies in the field of analytical typography take an interest in the printed page chiefly as it related to the reader.

From at least one standpoint, the field of analytical typography is not really new. Serious scientific studies of legibility in Britain go back at least until 1912, and the celebrated Pyke Report, published by the British Medical Research Council, could, in 1926, attempt to present “in accessible order” all the legibility studies

carried out before that date. A book by G. W. Ovink appeared in an English version in 1938 under the title *Legibility, Atmosphere-Value and Forms of Printing Types*. Published in Leiden (Holland), it soon went out of print and is now considered a "rare" book. Journal articles on related topics also appeared sporadically—but activity was diffuse and published work sparse.

The publication of Sir Cyril Burt's book, *A Psychological Study of Typography* in 1959 can be taken as a convenient starting point for the new movement. It was at about this time that psychologists began to intensify their interest in different aspects of typography. In certain respects, the timing of this renewed and revitalized interest in the printed page is difficult to explain. This was the generation, according to countless McLuhanesque predictions, which was to witness the slow demise of books. The prophets of doom promised that the book would eventually be discarded as a primary medium of communication.

Perhaps one way to explain the renewed interest in the printed page is to consider the nature of the book itself. Here is an object which magically draws together many facets of human behavior. The printed book is precariously balanced at the interface of countless perceptual, intellectual, and creative activities of man. When man is considered as a thinker, symbol maker, writer, or reader, the book may be regarded as his logical companion. Furthermore, the book is a convenient aid to all kinds of research—it is familiar, multi-faceted, readily available, and, as research aids go, incredibly cheap. When, in the 1960's, psychologists began to turn away from animal research and return to the study of human processes, it was natural that the book should have come to take on major importance.

There is another reason for the renewed interest in the printed page, an educational one. In 1957, two years before Burt's book appeared signalling, at least in retrospect, the beginning of the analytical typography movement, the Russians sent their first satel-

lite into space. The American reaction to this technological feat was panic; and, for want of a better victim, their hysteria became directed toward the American educational system. Articles like "Why Johnny Can't Read" are now past, and somewhat shameful history. But they did have some positive consequences. One of the side-effects of this campaign in the media was to force the federal government to fund generously many research programs which aimed at a fuller understanding of the reading process.

One of these programs, Eleanor Gibson's at Cornell, attempted to discover the critical characteristics which aided a young child in deciphering one letter from another. Project Literacy, another federal program coordinated by Harry Levin at Cornell, resulted in a major book, *Basic Studies in Reading*, which gathered together diverse studies in the reading field and became an indispensable text to scholars in analytical typography.

For all these reasons, and probably many more, analytical typography has grown in importance over the last ten years and now can safely be called a serious movement. While its relationship to historical and aesthetic typography is still largely undefined, there are encouraging signs that its fresh insights will reawaken and revitalize the study of old and rare volumes. Still, however, analytical typography is essentially a research program within psychology. Its approach is social scientific and its world-view essentially a psychological one. As a movement in typography it represents a clean break with the past and it remains to be seen whether the first signs of cooperation between psychology and typography will grow to greater fruition.

To understand precisely what is involved in such a union of interests and approaches, let us look at three works taken respectively from historical, aesthetic and analytical typography. A brief summary of Konrad Haebler's *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, Victor Hammer's *Digression on the Roman Letter*, and Paul Kolers' *Clues to a letter's recognition: Implications for the design of characters*

may help to point out the diversity of interests which co-exist in the three approaches to typographic study.

Haebler vs. Hammer vs. Kolers

Historical Typography (Haebler) : If anyone would attempt to dispute the fact that Konrad Haebler was the greatest typographic historian of all time, he would at least be forced to concede that Haebler shares this distinction with any rival choice. It is true that Haebler devoted his life to a mere fifty year period within the five century old history of printing, but his study of incunabular types was so exhaustive that it added immeasurably to our understanding of early printing.

Haebler was not only an eminent historian, he was also an imaginative and thorough researcher. His *Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke*, a six-volume *tour-de-force* of historical scholarship, is a monument both to the ingenuity and exhaustiveness of his research methods. The work was published in Halle and Leipzig between 1905 and 1924 and attempts to use typography as a convenient tool in the analysis of incunables.

Haebler's work was aimed at the common problem in bibliographic study of making the correct attribution of a 15th-century book to its printer. Incunables themselves often contain no obvious clues and, at least in Haebler's time, one of the goals of incunabular studies was to make correct identifications and attributions. It was Haebler who proved conclusively that typography could be immensely helpful in that task.

Since the practice of typefounding was still quite new in the 15th century, most printers had to cut and cast their own type. Because of this, each printer's type fonts contained peculiar idiosyncrasies which, if known, made possible the almost certain identification of the printer's books. Haebler's *Typenrepertorium* is essentially a dictionary of typographic idiosyncrasies, arranged in a convenient and imaginative way.

Haebler chose certain highly variable test letters, most especially the capital letter "M." Given a type font in an incunable, the scholar could check the form of its "M" against more than a hundred forms illustrated in a chart. When the correct match was made, the researcher could then run through a check-list of other idiosyncracies until his printer was positively identified.

The *Typenrepertorium* is an example of the highest level to which works in the field of historical typography can aspire. While typography, in this instance, is clearly intended to play "second fiddle" to bibliography, Haebler's approach is so thorough and his research techniques so spectacular, that the *Typenrepertorium* is assured the distinction of remaining a classic for many decades.

Aesthetic Typography (Hammer) : Victor Hammer was not only a distinguished representative of the modern private press movement here in America, he was also a type designer and something of an authority on calligraphy and type. Today, examples of Hammer's printing are much sought after; and though Victor Hammer is dead, the high quality of work associated with his name is continuing under the direction of his widow, Carolyn.

Victor Hammer's essay "Digressions on the Roman Letter" can be found in one of his posthumous volumes, *Chapters on Writing and Printing*, published in 1963. The essay's importance stems partly from the fact that there are few writings in the area of aesthetic typography which are so cogently and imaginatively done. The essay is neither scholarly nor scientific. If anything, its tone is anti-scientific and its form is that of a dialogue, presumably between two experienced practitioners of the art of printing. The greatest value of this essay is that, like other good writing in the area of aesthetic typography, it helps to educate and discipline the eye of the layman.

For example, Hammer makes the point in "Digressions . . ." "The Roman letter looks its best in Latin and is not adequate for German, English, or Czech for instance." (p. 27.)

Hammer offers the following typographic demonstration to prove the point: on one page a Latin verse by Ovid is printed; on the next, a Goethe translation of the same poem appears in German. Visually speaking, the difference in the two texts is remarkable—the forms of certain letters (*u, m, n, c, o*), so prevalent in Latin, give the original version a flowing appearance which the German text, with its numerous capitals and other ascenders, clearly lacks. Hammer comments: “Wonderful as this passage from Ovid sounds as translated into German by Goethe, you can see here at a glance how badly the same typographic garment fits such an entirely different frame . . .” (p. 29.)

The best of the aesthetic typography literature is, like Hammer’s essay, clear and straightforward. Its profound insights derive from the firsthand, direct, everyday experience which the writers, who are mostly printers and designers, have with their subject. It is a pity that there are so few printers who are able or willing to write about typography, for their insights would go far in helping laymen who cannot easily bring the artist’s vision to the apprehension of the printed page. As it is, the literature in aesthetic typography is disappointingly small and works of the quality of Hammer’s essay frustratingly rare.

Analytical Typography (Kolars)—Paul Kolars is a cognitive psychologist who has been associated with Harvard University, the Bell Telephone Laboratories, and is currently professor of psychology at the University of Toronto. Kolars’ work has concentrated almost exclusively on an examination of the process whereby humans recognize patterns and decode symbols. By extension, his research has touched on reading and typography.

Koler’s article, “Clues to a letter’s recognition: Implications for the design of characters,” appeared in the *Journal of Typographic Research* in 1969. The article is in three parts. In the introduction, Kolars outlines the methodological difficulties in researching a complex skill such as reading under normal circumstances. He defends

the approach which he and his associates ultimately adopted—altering and distorting texts in order to study the strategies that subjects would use to recognize them: “The complexity and automaticity make the study of reading difficult under ordinary circumstances. Thus, if we wish to study the process, we must change the circumstances. The scientist’s method, when he is faced with complexity, calls for distorting reality.” (p. 146.)

Kolers then summarizes several experiments in which the orientation of letters and the direction of reading were manipulated. In these experiments, he noted that a subject’s ability to recognize letters was dependent upon certain visual clues, and that these clues tended to be located on the right-hand side of the letters, the portion which holds the greatest information for discriminatory purposes.

In the final section of the article, Kolers turns his attention to letter design. Analyzing several type fonts, he notes that in most cases the heavy downstroke on the left side of many letters is an impeding factor in their rapid identification: “The heavy stroke at the left acts as a trap or moat for the eye, for it requires a good deal of visual processing to be apprehended, yet it conveys little information.” (p. 160.)

Finally, on the past page of the article, Kolers presents a new type face designed, under his supervision, by Jerome Abelman of Bell Telephone Laboratories. Kolers offers it “not as prescription but as illustration,” showing how the results of his experiments might lead to improved type designing: “It should be possible to take advantage of the spatial location of clues (on the right) to design a typeface that is pleasant in appearance and yet lubricates the eye along the line of print.” (p. 164.)

* * *

It is obvious that the three approaches to typographic study—the historical, the aesthetic, and the analytical—have diverse priorities, goals and research methods. Sometimes the differences may complement one another, but at other times it is clear that they will pull in opposite directions. Consider a type designer with Victor Hammer

standing over one shoulder and Paul Kolers over the other. It is not a thought that one would relish.

Yet, while it remains to be seen to what extent scholars in the field of analytical typography will display sensitivity toward the traditions of earlier approaches, there are already encouraging signs. Kolers has commented, in a letter to me, that while he was at Harvard he was not a stranger at the Houghton Library. More important, when Sir Cyril Burt published his *Psychological Study of Typography* in 1959, he asked Stanley Morison to write the Introduction. This collaboration was immensely successful as it gave readers the benefit of two diverse approaches to the problem of typographic legibility.

Thus, the "new directions" in typographic research may be viewed as the latest revitalization of a field which has a long and glorious history. Goals and methods will change in every science; but a sense of the past will inevitably enrich and augment the concerns of the future.

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We hope in due course to follow up this article with essays from practicing printers, type designers and cutters, and paper makers—*Ed.*

RECORD OF EXHIBITS HELD AT THE BOOK CLUB

1963—1973

THE Robert Grabhorn memorial exhibit which opened the first part of September this year, and ran through October, marked the completion of 24 years of exhibits in the Club Rooms, and is the 167th exhibit since that first exhibit opened in October 1949. Albert Sperisen, the first chairman of exhibits, is currently serving his third term: 1949-1955; 1959-1960; 1972 to date. Duncan Olmsted also served three terms: 1955-1957; 1960-1967; 1968-1972. J. Terry Bender served 1957-1959, and William P. Barlow, Jr., 1967-1968.

The use of postal cards to announce the exhibits was started with the ninth exhibit in 1950, and, with but five exceptions, has continued ever since. These cards, printed by 43 different printers and presses, have become collectors' items. Most of the early cards are now out of print, but extra copies of later cards are still available in the Club Rooms for those members who may wish to fill out their collections.

The first checklist of the exhibits and the printers of the announcement cards, covering the first six years, 1949-1955, and 49 exhibits, was published in the *Quarterly News-Letter* of Fall 1955 (Volume XX, Number 4). The second checklist, covering the next eight years, 1955-1963, and also 49 exhibits, appeared in the Fall 1963 issue (Volume XXVIII, Number 4). The present checklist covers the last ten years, 1963-1973, and 69 exhibits.

<i>Opening Date</i>	<i>Exhibit</i>	<i>Press</i>
1963		
October 7	<i>Robert Louis Stevenson's San Francisco</i>	Adrian Wilson
December 6	<i>Oscar Lewis, The Grabhorn Press and The Book Club</i>	Grabhorn Press

1964

January 20	<i>Charles Ricketts and the Vale Press</i>	Black Vine Press
February 17	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 9	<i>The Allen Press</i>	Allen Press
April 20	<i>Max Beerbohm</i>	Ted Freedman
June 22	<i>Book Club publications on California</i>	Greenwood Press
September 14	<i>Roxburghe Club Keepsakes</i>	Tamal Land Press
November 4	<i>Yosemite Valley</i>	Mallette Dean
December 7	<i>Diseños of California Ranchos</i>	Auerhahn Press

1965

February 23	<i>Western Books</i>	Auerhahn Press
March 15	<i>First books of Club's new library</i>	Auerhahn Press
June 25	<i>Second Reading: Quarterly News-Letter</i>	Plantin Press
August 16	<i>Gold Rush in fiction</i>	Tamal Land Press
October 4	<i>Adrian Wilson and Horatio Alger</i>	Mallette Dean
December 10	<i>Twelve Wood-Block Prints of Kitagawa Utamaro</i>	Andrew Hoyem

1966

February 21	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 14	<i>A Keepsake for Alfred A. Knopf</i>	Andrew Hoyem
May 18	<i>The Book Art of A. R. Tommasini</i>	Ted Freedman
July 11	<i>The Seacoast of Bohemia</i>	Graham Mackintosh
		(design by Jack Stauffacher)
November 1	<i>Printing for pleasure among Book Club members</i>	Lawton Kennedy
December 5	<i>Biblical Books</i>	Mallette Dean
		(design by Allen Press)

1967

January 27	<i>California Pictorial Letter Sheets</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
February 20	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 15	<i>Stanbrook Abbey Press</i>	Greenwood Press
April 17	<i>San Francisco contemporary hand bookbinders</i>	Greenwood Press
May 22	<i>Book Club publications and their illustrators</i>	James Beard
		(design by Mallette Dean)
September 25	<i>History of the West in Book Club publications</i>	Lawton Kennedy
November 1	<i>Eric Gill</i>	Ward Ritchie Press
December 15	<i>The Sting of the Wasp</i>	Plantin Press

1968

February 26	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 25	<i>Gelett Burgess's Behind the Scenes</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem

May 6	<i>The Cummington Press</i>	Cummington Press
July 1	<i>Roxburghe Club Announcements</i>	Tamal Land Press
October 21	<i>Edward Robeson Taylor</i>	Lawton Kennedy
December 9	<i>Shakespeare in fine editions</i>	Adrian Wilson
1969		
February 24	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 17	<i>Theo Jung</i>	Theo Jung and Stanford University Press
May 19	<i>Archy Lee</i>	Mallette Dean and James E. Beard
November 10	<i>H.M.S. Sulphur</i>	Castle Press
December 8	<i>Designs on the land</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
1970		
February 24	<i>Western Books</i>	Adrian Wilson
March 23	<i>Illustrated by Beardsley</i>	Clifford Burke
July 1	<i>Printing as a Performing Art</i>	Tamal Land Press
August 1	<i>Mid-nineteenth century color printing, Britain & America</i>	Greenwood Press
November 8	<i>Journal of a Journey Across the Plains in 1859</i>	Greenwood Press
December 14	<i>Sketches of California and Hawaii</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
1971		
February 22	<i>Western Books</i>	Adrian Wilson
March 22	<i>Frederic W. Goudy</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
June 7	<i>Ah-Wah-Ne Days</i>	Mallette Dean
September 1	<i>Stanley Morison</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
October 25	<i>California, Land of Gold</i>	Lawton Kennedy
December 8	<i>Dr. Johnson & Noah Webster</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
1972		
January 25	<i>Eragny Press</i>	Clifford Burke
February 28	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 24	<i>BR's Choice</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
June 6	<i>Rezanov Reconnoiters California</i>	Greenwood Press
July 5	<i>T. M. Cleland</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
September 5	<i>Book Club Diamond Jubilee</i>	Greenwood Press
October 9	<i>Alberto Tallone</i>	Greenwood Press
November 13	<i>Oscar Wilde</i>	Lawton Kennedy
December 18	<i>California as an island</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
1973		
January 15	<i>American Expatriate printers and publishers</i>	Tamal Land Press

February 26	<i>Western Books</i>	Tamal Land Press
March 26	<i>The collected work of William P. Barlow Jr.</i>	Nova Press
May 7	<i>An overland journey to Carson Valley and California</i>	Clifford Burke
June 1	<i>Gregynog Press</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
August 1	<i>Daniel Press</i>	Grabhorn-Hoyem
September 5	<i>Robert Grabhorn</i>	Lawton Kennedy

"VIEWS"

MEMBERS have not responded with the expected enthusiasm to the call in the last *Quarterly* for their bookplates or pressmarks; in fact, but seven replies have so far been received. So that our exhibits chairman's heart is not broken, do please send in the relevant material to the Club as soon as possible.

Allen Press collectors will be delighted to know that their 39th limited edition is off the press; *Four Fictions* is a concise presentation of literature, book arts and crafts, of England, France, U.S.A. and Italy. The authors are Conrad, Flaubert, Henry James and Pirandello, and each tale is illustrated with a full-page, three-color engraving or drawing by a noted artist of the author's country and printed on paper from that country. The book is 168 pp., 14 by 9½ inches, produced entirely by hand and printed damp in two colors throughout; 137 copies at \$100.00 each are available from Lewis and Dorothy Allen at 10 Ridgcrest Road, Kentfield, Ca. 94904.

The Sacramento Book Collectors Club has just published *Early Sacramento . . . from the Diaries of H.R.H. Duke Paul of Württemberg* translated by Louis Butscher and edited with an introduction by John Hussey; the first book to be issued under the new imprint of Andrew Hoyem—Printer, the edition of 400 copies is now available at \$25.00 each from the Club, 7440 Alexander Court, Fair Oaks, Ca. 95628; members should not miss this valuable addition to the early history of Sacramento and the Indians of Central California.

Another delightful book just published is Joyce Wilson's *The Four Kings of the Forest*, a fable for children of all ages illustrated by 11

four-color prints by the author; printed by Adrian Wilson and Lucy Dines in an edition of 275 copies at \$11.00 each, it is available from the Press, 1 Tuscany Alley, San Francisco, Ca. 94133.

Honorary Director Oscar Lewis' work was the subject of a fine exhibition at San Francisco Public Library recently, and Director Norman H. Strouse opened an exhibition of his modern bindings with a witty and informative talk in the Bender Room at Stanford University; this latter exhibit will transfer to the Bancroft Library in Berkeley early in the New Year.

The last publication in the collaboration of Robert Grabhorn and Andrew Hoyem is a signed limited edition of the *Motets* of the foremost Italian poet, Eugenio Montale, with facing English translation by Lawrence Kart. It is available at \$25.00 from Andrew Hoyem, Printer, at 566 Commercial Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94111.

The Christmas Book progresses apace and should surprise and delight members; the keepsakes, on the Indian tribes of California, are also exceptional and will be treasured additions to our collections.

BOOK GIFTS

WITH the dispersal of Robert Grabhorn's collections, the Club has acquired an unusual book through the generosity of Director Joseph M. Bransten. This is an item of uncommon interest. The printer is relatively unimportant. It is a dissertation on law, in Latin, written by Robert Dundas of Arniston (1758-1819) who was the solicitor-general of Scotland. It was printed for him by Balfour and Smellie in 1779. Its real interest is in its elegant binding and in its provenance. Before Robert Grabhorn owned this copy, it belonged to William Bourne and it contains his Filoli bookplate. The author Dundas, had inscribed this copy to the Earl of Kinnoul and this would account for its splendid presentation Scottish binding. The binding is an all-over design made up of gold tooling in a rose window or fanfare design on red morocco, both front and back. The end-papers are Dutch with a multi-colored stencil design on gold. These end papers are almost as handsome as the binding.

We are thankful to Director Bransten for this most unusual book with its beautiful period binding, and its unusual association interests. This book will find a happy place among our small but select group of fine bindings. A.S.



JANE BISSELL GRABHORN

1911—1973

JANE BISSELL GRABHORN * 1911—1973 *

JANE GRABHORN died October 1st, 1973, just a few months after her famous husband, Robert. Jane, too, was famous, perhaps in a somewhat smaller compass. The Jumbo Press, The Colt Press—these were her creations, and she gave the world of printing — at least with the Jumbo Press—a new concept of the art, a concept that might be called humorous composition. There was no one like her for getting the most out of an ornament or an initial. Those fortunate enough to possess these early efforts know how witty, how amusing they could be, both in content and in typographical eccentricity. And it was spontaneous wit, for many of these happily conceived jests were composed directly into type. She seldom bothered with pen or pencil when there were a stick and a type case handy.

The Colt Press was a more sober venture. It was founded in 1938 by William Roth, Jane Swinerton, and Jane herself. The press work was mostly by

Lawton Kennedy. They printed mainly interesting & original work dealing with California, but their output was by no means restricted to regional publishing. They ranged the fields of poetry, essays and even novels. In 1956 Jane Grabhorn was honored by a one-man show at Stanford University of the work of both the Jumbo and Colt Presses.

With the advent of World War II Bill Roth retired from the firm and the project was given up. But the Colt Press did not die. It became an adjunct of the Grabhorn Press, and Bob and Jane published numerous books under its imprint, some notable ones for the Book Club of California.

Early in her married life Jane took up bookbinding under the tutelage of one of California's greatest binders — Belle McMurtry Young. She became most proficient at the art and of late years she bound many of the Grabhorn Press books.

With the passing of Jane Grabhorn the artistic world not only of San Francisco but of the whole of America has lost a dedicated craftsman, a lady of infinite charm and great talent.

DAVID MAGEE

This memorial is presented to the members of the Book Club of California by Andrew Hoyem, who composed the text in Friar, a type given to Jane by its designer, Frederic W. Goudy, and by Lawton & Alfred Kennedy, who did the press work, Nov. 1973.

Obituaries

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HANS E. SCHUBERTH

Hans E. Schubert, the founder of the San Francisco bookbindery which has been responsible for the binding of many Book Club of California editions died on October 31, 1973. His nature was always enthusiastic and giving, and his work was characterized by sensitivity, precision and fine materials, including European cloths and papers imported specially for the firm. One of ten brothers, he was born in 1893 and served his apprenticeship in his father's bookbindery near Leipzig. In 1926 he came to the United States and set up a bindery in Iowa City, later moving to Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Eugene. In 1950 he established The Schubert Bookbindery in San Francisco and was soon joined by his son, Hans G. Schubert, who had been with the University of California Press bindery. Together they executed numerous commissions for Grabhorn-Hoyem, The Greenwood Press, Tamarind Lithography Workshop, and Adrian Wilson, as well as for private collectors and commercial firms. Hans G. Schubert is continuing the business at 821 Howard Street, San Francisco.

—ADRIAN WILSON

ELEANOR HESTHAL

ON Tuesday, October 2, 1973, Miss Eleanor Hesthal, a long-time member of The Book Club, died at Mt. Zion Hospital. She was a hand bookbinder, book collector and teacher, and as a poet had been awarded the Phelan Prize for poetry.

Miss Hesthal's bindings had been exhibited at the Portland, Oregon, Art Museum, at the Museum West of the American Craftsman's Council, Ghirardelli Square, and at several shows at The Book Club. In 1939, she assisted Herbert and Peter Fahey in arranging the exhibit of Fine Bindings at the Golden Gate International Exposition at Treasure Island, and she assisted Mrs. Fahey in the bookbinding *atelier* in the Fine Arts building the first year of the exposition.

For several years Miss Hesthal assisted on the Exhibit Committee of The Book Club, and often she loaned material for the exhibits from her extensive book collection, which included press books, literature and juveniles. She also had a fine collection of antique valentines, children's toys and early trade cards.

Miss Hesthal taught bookbinding at the Fahey Studio, and also had taught drama at the Elizabeth Holloway School of the Theatre, where she had studied and performed.

—DUNCAN OLMSTED

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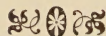
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